

Dateline:

Labor & Workforce Development

A quarterly publication for employers from the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development
September 2006

New Rate Year begins for employers . . . Premium Table 5 kicks in

Tennessee employers were recently informed of their individual premium rates for the new rate year that began July 1st. Some employers have employed workers long enough to be eligible for a rate based on their own benefit and premium experience, while others remain subject to the standard new employer rate of 2.7%. New employers in certain industries, such as construction and NAICS sectors 31 and 33 within the manufacturing industry, will again be subject to a 6.0% premium rate, while those in the mining and extraction industry will see their rate adjusted downward slightly to 7.5%.

Beginning next year, we hope to inform you of your premium rate a full month sooner than we have been able to do until now. In conjunction with our effort to make

rate notices available to Tennessee employers more promptly, the General Assembly this year enacted legislation moving back the deadline for submitting claims for adjustment or refund - and having such adjustment/refund factored into the new year's premium rate calculation - by one month, from March 31st to the last day of February. We believe this change will help us in our efforts to move our rates calculation processes along more swiftly and inform you of your premium rate sooner after the start of the new rate year.

July 1st also marked our return to Premium Table 5 and its somewhat lower rates for experience-rated employers. Table 5 will be in effect for the third and fourth calendar quarters of 2006.

Avoid unnecessary Benefit Charges

Have you had the experience of receiving a card in the mail from the Benefit Charge Unit? If so, you may feel surprise that someone who left your employment several months or even a year ago is now filing for unemployment. The state affords you an opportunity to request that your account not be charged for former employees who left without good cause. There is a process that must be followed, but non-charges can help you avoid an unnecessary increase in your premium rate.

Any time that a claim is filed for unemployment, a notification card

(LB-502) is sent to all base period employers. The base period goes back for the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters from the date the claim is filed. If you are the separating employer, this will be a one-part card and it will state "As separating employer, refer to your agency decision." This means that your former employee has filed for benefits, and if there is an issue it will be settled by an unemployment claims office. As the separating employer, you

(Continued on back)

Routing Box

- ☐ Personnel Director
- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Payroll Officer
- ☐ Other

For your own sake check your TNPAWS report

The Tennessee Premium and Wage Reporting System (TNPAWS) is an Internet-based application used to file the quarterly Premium and Wage Reports. The TNPAWS Web site is located at <http://tnpaws.tnui.net> and may be used by any active employer account with an access code. Please visit the TNPAWS homepage to learn more about this method of reporting.

Every quarter, we have employers who get distracted and submit an incorrect report, or forget to submit it at all. We all make mistakes and have interruptions. Please slow down and verify that the wages on the Preliminary Premium and Wage Report screen are accurate before filing the report.

To avoid penalty and interest charges, file your report before the due date, and don't exit the system until you have a confirmation number assigned to the report. In order to save yourself time and money, please check the report before you click that last button.

Thank you for using TNPAWS.

Avoid charges (Cont.)

will be charged if the claim is approved.

If the former employee has left your business and gone somewhere else to work and has been separated, you will receive a two-part notification card. This card is sent to the address of record on your unemployment insurance tax account. This gives you the opportunity to request a non-charge to your account. Benefit charges, like all unemployment issues, are subject to timeliness guidelines. Please note the return date on the card. If you receive it late and are not sure you will have enough time to respond, please call us at the number on the card, (615)741-2223.

Complete the "State copy" and return. We need the last date that the person worked for your business. Then mark whether the person quit or was discharged or state whatever reason he or she left your employment. There is space on the back of the card for additional information. Try to give us enough information to make a decision, not just a one word answer such as "Quit" or "Fired." If you wish to send more documentation you may do so.

The timely requesting of non-charges is the way to avoid receiving a quarterly Charge Statement and being surprised by the fact that your account is being charged. The Benefit Charge Unit mails out quarterly statements on any claim that has received charges from your account in the previous quarter. This is not a bill. It is for your information only. We always encourage you to call our number, (615) 741-2223, if you have any questions when you receive one of the benefit charge cards or statements. We will be glad at any point to walk you through the process of asking for a non-charge to

your account. Since this process can be very helpful to your bottom line, it is well worth your attention.

Employer committees are valuable contact with TDLWD

Within the TDLWD Marketing group, 10 employer services specialists (ESSs) are responsible for marketing the department's services to employers and establishing quarterly Workforce Employer Outreach Committees (WEOCs) across the state.

The purpose of the WEOC is to provide a broader reach to Tennessee's employer community and provide to them a direct link between the Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

Each WEOC enables two-way communication that fosters economic development, promotes departmental services, and facilitates distribution of policies and information.

Currently, every county in Tennessee is affiliated with a WEOC group, with more than 320 WEOC meetings being conducted annually.

The ESSs also visit more than 4,500 individual Tennessee employers annually, informing them of the services and programs of the TDLWD.

As a partner in the Governor's Anti-Meth campaign, the TDLWD presents the "Meth Destroys" materials and message to more than 3,300 employers across the state through ESS individual employer visits and WEOC meetings.

Additionally, the Marketing group has, year-to-date, presented TDLWD programs to 32 Chamber of Commerce groups, held 102 WEOC meetings, presented UI Fraud-Free

materials to 2,846 employers, presented Tennessee Drug-Free Workplace Materials to 3,011 employers, and just completed a summer campaign on Child Labor Law awareness reaching out to more than 2,000 employers.

Other programs coming this year will include Adult Education, HireVets, *The Source*, Worker's Compensation updates and more.

For more information on a WEOC forum in your area please contact Danna Douglas at (615) 741-7374 or e-mail danna.douglas@state.tn.us.

Applications for processing Alien Labor available online

The U.S. Department of Labor has established a system called PERM for processing Applications for Permanent Employment Certification, ETA Form 9089. Under PERM employers interested in hiring foreign workers have the option of filing an application electronically or by mail.

The employer can access the customer-friendly Web site www.plc.doleta.gov and after registering and establishing an account, electronically fill out and submit an application. Frequently asked questions and instructions for completing the PERM application may be located on www.workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/foreign.

Prior to submitting the application employers will be required to obtain a prevailing wage determination and place a 30-day-job-order for the recruitment process with the TDLWD.

For information on prevailing wage and job orders, please visit the department's Web site at www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd and click on Alien Labor Certification.

